

# WALKING IN THE SPIRIT



Lessons from Acts 1-10  
by Sue LeBoutillier

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*✧ Walking in the Spirit ✧*  
*The First Days of the Last Days*

Dear Friend,

It was during preparation for our study in **1&2 Peter** that the first ten chapters of Acts gripped me in a fresh way. I suppose the Apostle Paul had always seemed to be the central figure in the book of Acts; but studying Peter's two epistles gave me a reason to stand back and look at *his* presence in the first days of the Church. I began to take a look at the book of Acts in a whole new way.

Saul (the Apostle Paul) didn't even enter the picture until chapter 9, about 8-10 years into the growth of the new Church! Peter and John were the primary figures in those early days. My intrigue with God's choice to use Peter so profoundly in the continuing ministry of Jesus on earth, especially after his failure during the Passion Week, is how this study was birthed. The book of Acts, after all, is neither about Paul or Peter, nor any of the Apostles. It's about God's unfolding work of redemption—His grace, His plan, His work through the Holy Spirit!

Peter warned us what would happen "*in the last days...*" (**2 Peter 3:3**). But what are *the last days*? *The last days* are easy to define — they encompass the entire chunk of history from the Ascension of Jesus in Acts 1 to His return.... whenever that happens.

God, through the power of the Holy Spirit used Peter mightily in the *first days of the last days*. It is my ambition and, I hope yours as well, that God would use us mightily in the *last days of the last days*.

Jack Hayford says, "*The book of Acts is the story of the disciples receiving what Jesus received — the empowering of the Holy Spirit — in order to continue what Jesus did.*"

In the Gospels we learn what Jesus **began** to do and to teach. In Acts the Risen Lord **continues** to do and to teach through the Apostles and His Church today.

Acts is about ordinary people doing extraordinary things. If you feel quite ordinary, then this will be a perfect Bible Study for you.

Here are some reminders as you approach each lesson:

- 1) **Pray**—Ask God to keep your mind on track and help you understand each passage. We can't hope to understand spiritual matters without the illumination of the Spirit of God.
- 2) **Read**—If at all possible, read the entire chapter being studied each day—read it aloud if you can—we often get a different sense of the passage by hearing it aloud.
- 3) **Apply**—Remember, our objective is to ask ourselves...
  - What does it **say**?                      Comprehension
  - What does it **mean**?                      Interpretation
  - What does it **mean to me**?              Application

If you're diligent to read the passage and work through the questions offered, you will gain insights into how God extended hope to His followers in that day, and vision for your own life and circumstances. Many of the questions will also serve as a source of topics for your small group discussions. Sharing with other women and hearing their perspective often sharpens us for more purposeful Kingdom use!

Are you ready? Let's get started!

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To watch the video teachings for this Bible Study go to:

[ccontario.com/womens-studies](http://ccontario.com/womens-studies)

or

[YouTube.com/calvarychapelontario](https://www.youtube.com/calvarychapelontario)

\*The best translation of the Bible to use is the one you understand the most easily—and using more than one translation can be a great aid to study! This study guide was created using the ESV (English Standard Version), which may be a helpful tool as you work through your study.





## Acts Chapter 2

After studying all of Acts chapter one in our introduction, we'll slow down a bit and study chapters 2-10 more slowly. Before we do, let's look back and record two of the most important verses in the entire book:

WRITE Acts 1:1 \_\_\_\_\_

(Circle the key words *Jesus, began, do, teach*)

WRITE Acts 1:8 \_\_\_\_\_

(Circle the key words *Holy Spirit, power, witnesses*)

**Jesus began** to **do** miraculous signs and to **teach** about the Kingdom of God to those who would accept it. By the **Holy Spirit**, the Apostles would receive **power** to continue that same work, as they became **witnesses** of Jesus Christ to any who would believe and receive.

The key element in this Bible Study will be the work of the Spirit.  
The key element in our personal lives today is the work of the Spirit.

*As a body without breathe is a corpse,  
so the church without the Spirit is dead.*  
—John Stott<sup>1</sup>



Let's organize our first week of study into four parts that will be studied over four days:

- ☞ v.1-13 — What Actually Happened on the Day of Pentecost?
- ☞ v.14-36 — The Spirit Empowered Peter to Preach
- ☞ v.37-41 — The Spirit Convicted the Crowd of sin
- ☞ v.42-47 — The Spirit Enabled the Believers in a Lifestyle of Unity

## DAY ONE: “What Actually Happened on the Day of Pentecost?”

Read Acts 2 — All 47 verses. Now let’s focus on studying only the first 13 verses for today.

This chapter begins with the casual statement, ‘*When the day of Pentecost arrived*’. Luke provided no explanation. He assumed his audience understood the significance. But *we* may not know or understand. So, before we go any further, let’s learn what this setting is all about.

The day of Pentecost was the fiftieth day after Passover. It was celebrated by offering the first fruits of the wheat harvest in the form of two loaves made of fine flour. On account of the seven weeks intervening between it and the Passover, it is styled, in the Old Testament, “*the feast of weeks*.” But the fact that it occurred on the fiftieth day, gave it, in later ages, under the prevalence of the Greek language, the name of *Pentecost*, which is a Greek adjective meaning *fiftieth*.

— A Commentary on Acts of Apostles<sup>2</sup>

In this particular time we are reading about, we have had:

- 1) **Passover**—THE Passover when the REAL Passover Lamb was offered for the sins of the world.
- 2) Then, we had the **Feast of First Fruits**, which fell on Resurrection Sunday—THE Resurrection Sunday when Jesus rose as the First Fruit of all who would be raised.
- 3) Then, the next feast on the Jewish calendar was (in Greek) **Pentecost** —where traditionally TWO loaves of bread were waved before the Lord. The fulfillment taking place in two stages—first, the Jews on the day of Pentecost and later, the Gentiles at Cornelius’ house.

Now that we’ve dug a little further into knowing **When** these events happened, let’s discover some other aspects from **v.1-4**:

- **Who** seemed to be gathered together? (Check back to 1:15 also)
  
- **Where** did they seem to be gathered?

- Describe **what** happened to them collectively (all that you notice):

NOTE: To determine what is meant by *speaking in other tongues*, look ahead to **v.6, 8** which explains it as: \_\_\_\_\_

Now from **v.5-11** let's discover:

- **Who** was in Jerusalem for this celebration (**v.5**)?
- **What** was the reaction or response of the people (**v.6-7**)?
- **What** were the believers saying in the various languages (**v.11**)?
- From **v.12-13**, we see two different reactions among the crowd. Describe the two responses:
  - 
  -

The Spirit couldn't be given to indwell believers any sooner since Jesus had to die, be raised to life, and ascend to His Father in Heaven.

Remember what we learned about the Jewish calendar:

**Passover => Feast of First Fruits => Pentecost**

As we wrap up, there are a couple of elements to notice:

- 1) This is the first of many *fillings* of the Holy Spirit that we'll encounter in the book of Acts.
- 2) Notice, in **v.4**, that **ALL** the believers gathered were filled with the Holy Spirit and **ALL** of them declared the *mighty works of God* to people who needed to hear it.

- 3) Notice that the language they began to speak was not their choice, but God's choice FOR them.

How do each of those elements relate to YOUR life?

If the power of the Holy Spirit was removed from your life today, would you notice? Would anyone notice?

## **DAY TWO: “The Spirit Empowered Peter to Preach”**

Read Acts 2, then focus on v.14-36. Today and tomorrow, we'll dig into Peter's words as he explained to the crowd what was happening! Peter's understanding of Old Testament Scripture was incredible. For someone who spent his days netting fish, possession of these insights and this recall was truly admirable. Using prophecy so effortlessly in his speech is testimony to: 1) the filling of the Holy Spirit—which comes with power, and 2) evidence that he spent time in the *School of Ministry* with Jesus!

- Write a short account of **who** Peter was talking to (from v.8-14):

We know the crowd was predominately Jewish because of Peter's references to 'men of Judea' (v.14), and 'men of Israel' (v.22). However, they were certainly an international, multilingual crowd.

**Verses 17-21** are a combination of Old Testament prophecies from Joel, Isaiah, and Ezekiel.

- What are some of the key promises you see in this prophecy?



**Verses 22-36** contain the meat of Peter's sermon. He skillfully took his listeners through the *life, ministry, death, resurrection, and exaltation* of Jesus Christ, in order to arrive at salvation and the gift of the Holy Spirit at the end. Let's look at these elements:

- **V.22: *Life and Ministry of Jesus***: What was proof of His Godhood?
  
- **V. 23-32: *Death and Resurrection of Jesus***:
  - How was Jesus' death part of God's plan?
  
  - What is the contrast presented between David's and Jesus' deaths and burials?
  
  - There is a super important aspect to **v.32**. What do you think it is? (See also **2 Peter 1:16**)
  
- **V.33-36: *Exaltation of and Salvation through Jesus***:
  - How did Peter connect the exaltation of Jesus to the events the crowd witnessed that morning?
  
  
  - Describe Peter's summary in **v.36**.

I'm not sure that ending an evangelistic message by blaming your audience for killing Jesus would be something found in any "*Four Easy Steps to Save Souls*" manual. And yet, this was the first evangelistic sermon preached! You may already know, but we'll find out, in five verses, that it was tremendously effective.

- Read **Isaiah 55:8-9**. How might these truths have something to teach us about the work God has for *us* to do?

### DAY THREE: “The Spirit Convicted the Crowd of Sin”

Read **Acts 2**, then focus on **v.37-41**.

- How did the people respond to Peter’s message?
- What did Peter tell them they needed to *do*? (**v.38**)

A casual reading of verse 38 could lead one to conclude that baptism is somehow a necessary part of the salvation experience. Let’s read what our dear theologian Warren Wiersbe said about this passage:

It is unfortunate that the translation of Acts 2:38 in the *KJV* suggests that people must be baptized in order to be saved, because this is not what the Bible teaches. The Greek word *eis* (which is translated "for" in the phrase "for the remission of sins") can mean "on account of" or "on the basis of." In Matthew 3:11 John the Baptist baptized on the basis that people had repented. Acts 2:38 should not be used to teach salvation by baptism. If baptism is essential for salvation, it seems strange that Peter said nothing about baptism in his other sermons (Acts 3:12-26; 5:29-32; 10:34-43). In fact, the people in the home of Cornelius received the Holy Spirit *before they were baptized!* (Acts 10:44-48) Since believers are commanded to be baptized, it is important that we have a clean conscience by obeying (1 Peter 3:21), but we must not think that baptism is a part of salvation.

— Bible Exposition Commentary (BE Series) <sup>3</sup>

- Since Peter, along with the eleven other Apostles, were *eye witnesses* to Jesus' ministry, death and resurrection, and since we have noticed this was an international crowd who was gathered, why do you think Peter emphasized what he did in **v.39**?
- What potential misunderstanding could he have cleared up?
- How many were added to the Church that day?

#### **DAY FOUR: "The Spirit Enabled the Believers in a Lifestyle of Unity"**

Read **Acts 2**, then focus on **v.42-47**. One way to view the events of the Day of Pentecost is a reversal of the judgement at the Tower of Babel. At that time, *the whole earth had one language and the same words* (**Genesis 11:1**) — man was set on exalting himself, so God came to confuse their languages and separate the people.

On the Day of Pentecost, through the work of the Holy Spirit, God came upon those whose hearts were set on exalting Jesus and brought an understanding through language and a unity among the people. Verses 42-47 explain some additional elements of unity brought into the Body of Christ.

- List the four activities the believers devoted themselves to: (**v.42**)
  - 
  - 
  - 
  -

- Do you think those elements are still important in the Church today? Explain why:
  
- How were the lifestyles of the believers affected through these activities and the work of the Spirit?
  
- Since the young Church was continuing the work of Jesus through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, what do we see in **v.47** that *the Lord* did?

*Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved!*  
Acts 2:21

## THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN THE LAST DAYS:

As we study *the first days of the last days*, we want to take what we observe and apply it to our lives, as we walk out our days on earth in *the last days of the last days*. Each week, we'll devote the final day to the contemplation and summary of how to apply each chapter to our own lives. These questions may serve as great discussion material in your study groups as well.

- Share with your study group what has inspired you *most* through your study this week.
- Share some aspect of this chapter that you want to put into practice in your life.

The Day of Pentecost is a non-repeatable event with a specific purpose. But the filling of the Holy Spirit is a frequently repeated event and we'll see the filling of the Spirit multiple times in our study (**Acts 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9**). Our desire as believers in Jesus is to offer ourselves repeatedly for the *filling of the Holy Spirit*.

- Have you repented of your sins and believed in Jesus for forgiveness? Where? When? How?
- Have you sought the baptism of the Holy Spirit in your life for power to be His witness? If not, perhaps this week's study has given you the information and desire you need to make that simple request.
- Have you made it a practice to ask God for a fresh filling of His Holy Spirit on a regular basis?

NEAR THE END OF THIS STUDY GUIDE, YOU WILL FIND A  
FIVE-PAGE SUPPLEMENT ENTITLED,  
**"THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LIFE OF A BELIEVER"**  
YOU MAY WANT TO READ THAT SECTION NOW, AND REFER TO IT OFTEN,  
AS WE WORK OUR WAY THROUGH THIS BIBLE STUDY



## Acts Chapter 3

At the end of chapter two, we read that “many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles” (v.43). Luke couldn’t have possibly recorded *everything* that happened, but chapters three and four direct our focus to **one** of those great wonders — the healing of a lame beggar. This event drew another five thousand souls into the Kingdom.

There’s an important emphasis on *the name of Jesus* in these chapters and we also don’t want to miss the intentions of Peter and the other believers to exalt the Name and power of their Lord Jesus Christ among any who would hear and believe.

Our four day outline for this week will be:

- ☞ v.1-8 — Healing in the Name of Jesus
- ☞ v.9-13 — Wonder and Amazement at the Works of Jesus
- ☞ v.14-18 — Faith in the Name of Jesus
- ☞ v.19-26 — Refreshing and Blessings from the Person of Jesus



### DAY ONE: “Healing in the Name of Jesus”

Read Acts 3 — And, if possible, read chapter four as well, since it’s a continuing story. Now let’s dig into **verses 1-8** for today.

- **Where** were Peter and John going as this narrative begins?

You may scratch your head a little and think ‘*hey, these guys believe in Jesus and live in Him now. What are they doing going to the temple at the usual times for prayer as per the Jewish custom?*’

One thing to keep in mind is the growth of the Christian Church was a gradual process that started with the Jews on the Day of Pentecost and continued through the ingathering of the Gentiles in chapter 10 and went on to spread through the entire Mediterranean world.

One thing to keep in mind, as we read about Peter and John going up the steps to the temple, is this simple encouragement, *When you aren't sure what to do next, or what direction to take...*

- Just keep going on your usual path but observe your surroundings through fresh eyes...
- Perhaps, God will use your ordinary course of life for HIS glory!
- And that's exactly what happened to Peter and John!

Describe, from **v.2-3**, everything you notice about the lame man:

Write out Peter's response, from **v.6**, to the lame man: \_\_\_\_\_

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(Now be sure to underline, or mark in your Bible, this first mention of the '*Name of Jesus*' — which is our emphasis for chapters 3-4.)

- What did the lame man hope or expect to receive from Peter/ John? What did he actually receive?

Does this speak to you about the things *you* may be asking to receive right now from your Heavenly Father in prayer? Consider what He may actually be desiring to give you. We often ask for such temporary and fleeting gifts, and find that God desires to meet a much greater need.

Lastly, for today, note the lame man's initial responses after receiving healing from the Lord in **v.8**:

- **How** the lame man acted:
  
- **Where** the lame man went after his healing:



## DAY TWO: “Wonder and Amazement at the Works of Jesus”

Read **Acts 3**, then focus on **v.9-13**. Before we observe how the people at the temple reacted to this miraculous healing, let’s think about all of the ways in which the lame man is similar to each of us as sinners:

- His infirmity:
- His poverty:
- His position *outside* the temple:

Maybe you’re not too keen on *creative writing*, or maybe you love it. Either way, try writing a short paragraph from the perspective of being in attendance at temple prayer and witnessing this event:

**Verse 12** tells us that Peter took in all that was happening (just as he had done at the Day of Pentecost), and saw the opportunity to tell the gathering crowd about Jesus.

Sometimes, in the normal course of our daily path, we also have an open door to explain the work that Jesus has done in our lives. Some events are routine — like grocery shopping. Yet, some are dramatic or even traumatic, but they are still opportunities, and we should be aware of them when they happen.

Let's see what we can learn from Peter's *second* sermon in **v.12-13**:

- Based on Peter's opening words, what type of people seemed to make up the main audience?
- Do you think those people would have been acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures?
- Peter worked to shift attention away from himself and the lame man, and identify the Source of the miracle. How did he accomplish that?
- Again, Peter's approach was not something found in a '*winning friends and influencing people*' pamphlet. What did he say in **v.13** that would have required much Holy Spirit boldness?

Have you been in a situation lately that required you to speak some direct words of truth to someone? Share your situation.

How did the Holy Spirit give Peter this boldness, and how can He do the same for us?

### DAY THREE: “*Faith in the Name of Jesus*”

Read **Acts 3**, then focus on **v.14-18**, taking note of the *Name of Jesus*.

- What additional titles did Peter use for Jesus in these verses?

Write out **Proverbs 18:10**: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Underline, or mark in your Bible, the emphasis on the *Name of Jesus* and the Power of that Name/Authority (**v.16**). Note that Peter implied there was an action on the part of the lame man as well. What was it?

God has a way of using the actions of people to establish His purpose on earth. Peter acknowledged that they *acted in ignorance* (**v.17**). Yet, how do you see that their actions fulfilled God’s purpose?

Read **Luke 23:34**. What did Jesus Himself say about the actions of the Jews during His suffering and death?

As a response to the realization of what they had done to God’s Son, what did Peter suggest that people now do? (**v.19**)

## **DAY FOUR: “Refreshing & Blessings from the Person of Jesus”**

Read **Acts 3**, then focus on **v.19-26**, considering first what the words meant to the Jews who were there on that exact day. Now read them again, considering what they mean to you personally.

**TO THE JEWS:** Peter gave the message they must repent of their sins and come to faith in Jesus — the very One they sentenced to death — but Whom God raised up.

- **What** prophets and patriarchs did Peter mention in those verses?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- **Who** was Moses speaking about in **v.22**?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- **Why** was Jesus sent to the Jews (**v.26**)?

**TO ME AND YOU:** The instruction Peter gave about sins being blotted out doesn't change from a Jewish listener to you and me.

- What are the important truths given here for sins to be wiped out?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Once a woman has humbled herself before the Lord, admitted her sin and repented, what can she expect? (**v.20, 26**)

## THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN THE LAST DAYS:

Let's recap this chapter to apply to our own last days.

- It's true that *we can't save the whole world*. But, it's also true that *the whole world can be saved — one person at a time*. God has placed you in a specific time on the human timeline as well as in a specific location on the earth. As you're going about your normal routine this week, ask God to fill you with His Spirit so that, when you stumble into a situation similar to the lame beggar, you are prepared with God's words, actions, expressions and power *in the Name of Jesus*. (Be prepared to share with your group)
- The Jewish religious leaders were a *tough* crowd. They had already made up their minds. WE face tough people in our daily life, who have already made up their minds about spirituality, New Age thinking, Atheism, or other cultic beliefs. What aspects of Peter's speech inspires you to share with a *tough* crowd?
- Our world is in desperate need of truth. What is obvious, sometimes needs to actually be said aloud (as Peter did). Pray for boldness to speak words of truth as the Holy Spirit leads you.
- Go back to **Acts 1:8**, and refresh yourself as to the purpose of the Holy Spirit's work in your life.
- Consider how God used a well known person (like the lame man) to create an event that would cause people to stop, listen and ask questions. How could this same situation (perhaps less flamboyant) arise in your own context of life?



## Acts Chapter 4



I had first thought we should cover chapters 3&4 in one week, but there are some wonderful treasures for us in this chapter—especially regarding *The Name of Jesus*; and it's a great opportunity to observe the Evangelistic conflict the early Church experienced and apply any relevant concepts to our life.

Our four day outline for this week will be:

- ☞ v.1-7 — Confrontation due to the Name of Jesus
- ☞ v.8-22 — Preaching in the Name of Jesus
- ☞ v.23-31 — Prayer in the Name of Jesus
- ☞ v.32-37 — Unity because of the Spirit of Jesus



### DAY ONE: “Confrontation Due to the Name of Jesus”

Read **Acts 4**. Now, go back to **v.1-7**, and read them again as we study the events that unfolded as a result of the healing of the lame man.

- It seems that the Church had caught the attention of the Jewish authorities. List those who rose up in opposition to Peter & John:
  - What was their complaint against them?
- Find out, from **Luke 20:27**, the reason the Sadducees in particular were annoyed:
- The authorities recognized that Peter & John were beginning to act in the same way that Jesus had—healing people and teaching about the Kingdom of God. So, by what action did they begin to treat them in a similar way? (**v.3**)

- Go back to **Luke 22:47-65**, and identify any similarities you can find in how the chief priests handled Jesus a few months ago and how they treating Peter and John now.
- While the two men were in custody, what was happening in the hearts of thousands of others?
- As we arrive at the morning inquiry in **v.5-7**, list the participants and how they opened the questioning.

We've circled around to the issue of *authority, power, and name* again. Be sure to mark or underline this question in **v.7** in your Bible since Peter will provide a full-fledged answer in tomorrow's verses.

Read **John 15:18-21**. Note that a large part of hatred and persecution was "*on account of* \_\_\_\_\_"

## **DAY TWO: "Preaching in the Name of Jesus"**

Read **Acts 4**, then focus on **v.8-22**. Luke didn't merely record the answer to the Jewish leaders that came out of Peter's mouth—he also told us something important about what happened to Peter.

- **What** was it (**v.8**)?



- **How** do you think this affected his answer?

Peter's response in **v.9-12** was certainly Spirit-led:

- First, how did Peter account for a man, who was lame just a few hours ago, to then be walking?
  
- Second, notice in **v.10**, Peter pointed out an uncomfortable piece of information to a Jewish audience for a third time. What was it?

As if pointing out they have killed the Messiah wasn't enough, Peter elaborated, with a prophetic analogy, that Jesus Himself also quoted:

Read **Psalm 118:22**.

Read **Isaiah 28:16**.

Read Jesus' usage in **Luke 20:17**.

Read Peter's exhortation in **1 Peter 2:6-8**.

Also, mark the two tributes to '*the Name of Jesus*' in **v.10** and **v.12**.

Now, take a moment and write out **v.12** here in your study guide:

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Jesus being *the Chief Cornerstone*, and the only authority by which men can be saved were very **bold** statements. **Verse 12** told us the Jewish leaders recognized the **boldness** of Peter and John.

- What aspects did the religious leaders observe about the men? (v.13)
  
- What stark evidence to the Power of the Name of Jesus was hanging around—not to be denied? (v.14)

When you've got a 40-year old man, who was well known to be lame and regularly begging at the temple, and he is now bouncing across the room on his newly restored legs, there's not much you can do but clear the room, while you think of what to do next.

- Once everyone was brought back in, how did the religious leaders threaten Peter and John?
  
- From v.19-20, what was Peter and John's response to the threat?

As I'm writing this study, a similar situation is being played out in California. School authorities visited the home of a boy, whose mother had tucked Bible verses into his lunch. He freely shared those verses with his classmates (as they had asked for a verse). The authorities told the boy not to hand out Bible verses any longer at school. We can easily see that, being charged not to speak in the Name of Jesus, is just as relevant in these *last days* as it was in the *first days*.

### DAY THREE: “Prayer in the Name of Jesus”

Read **Acts 4**, then focus on **v.23-31**. I love that Peter and John run right to their *friends*, their *support system*. They were probably excited to share with them everything that happened and to pray together.

- After reading through their prayer, what strikes you most about what’s on their mind and the nature of their requests?

If we were to divide their prayer into three sections (as follows), what sort of *title or summary* would you give to each section?

- V.24
- V.25-28
- V.29-30

Now, let’s look at those three sections again, and write down any *inspiration* that you see for your own prayer life.

- V.24
- V.25-28
- V.29-30

Certainly, we must all be facing some difficulty or area in our life, where we need boldness to speak the *Words of Life*. Take time right now to put this model prayer into practice, and let's humble ourselves in God's presence and ask for HIS power to work through our lives.

- In what tangible way did God respond to the praying believers in v.31?

Lastly, go back to your Bible and mark both times in this chapter, where Luke narrates that someone was *filled with the Holy Spirit*.

#### **DAY FOUR: “Unity Because of the Spirit of Jesus”**

Read **Acts 4**, then focus on **v.32-37**. The writer of the book of Acts—Luke, stresses the oneness of Spirit, which was evident among the believers (**1:14**, **2:46**, **here**, and **5:12**). But, do you squirm a little bit when you read about them *having everything in common*?

There are a couple of reasons we may be uncomfortable with that lifestyle: 1) most of us have been raised in a independent, free-market culture, that encourages hard work and the tangible reward that follows; 2) we often link ownership with personal responsibility—which is a character trait we want to instill in our children; 3) this sounds too close to socialism to sit well with us.

Let's postpone until next week's lesson, the aspect of having their *stuff* in common. But, for today, we do want to consider the phrase: ***those who believed were of one heart and soul.***

- Share what you think that means:

- How do you see, in these verses, that God answered the prayers from the former passage?

With regard to meeting the needs of the Saints (v.34-35), we still have ample exhortation in the Word for this to be a lifestyle for us today. Read these passages, and make note of what you find:

**Matthew 7:12**

**Romans 12:13**

**1 Corinthians 10:24**

**Philippians 2:3-4**

**1 Timothy 6:17-19**

Has the Lord brought anything to your mind that is within *your* power to help meet a need? Perhaps you need to attend to that today.

Lastly, who is the man we are introduced to at the end of this chapter and what are some details about him? (v.36)

## THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN THE LAST DAYS:

In the *First Days of the Last Days*, anyone who was teaching in the Name of Jesus put themselves in the high-risk category for persecution and arrest. In the *Last Days of the Last Days* (in our culture anyway), we are quickly moving back to that experience—anyone teaching salvation in the Name of Jesus is at much higher risk than those who keep quiet.

- On a scale of 1 to 10, what is your current risk level for sharing the Good News of Jesus and why?
  
- How have these chapters inspired you to earnestly pray to be filled with the Spirit of Jesus for boldness to be a witness of God's work in your life?
  
- As we have read in these chapters about persecution mounting and prayers rising, have you noticed an absence of any *blame* placed on Satan for the Apostles' difficulties? Contrast that with how some Christians often speak today about Satan attacking them and creating difficulties for them. What are some of your conclusions?

- Think about that lame beggar, who was not only healed, but whose regular rhythm of life was turned upside down. Where was he now? Was he part of the Body of believers, who devoted themselves to earnest prayer and learning about their Messiah? What impact do you think he had in this new circle? What type of impact do people, who experience a radical transformation, have in our Body today?
  
- Remember how the religious leaders noted that Peter and John were ordinary men who *had been with Jesus*? What will it take, in your life, for people to take note that you are someone who *has been with Jesus*?





## Acts Chapter 5

The opening of this chapter is difficult for modern readers to wrap their minds around, but the *first days of the last days* were a unique and formative time in the life of the young Church, so we'll do our best to see the Spirit's desire for **purity, power** and **preaching** in the early days, all while under **persecution!**

Here's our four day outline for chapter five:

- ☞ v.1-11 — The Purity of the Early Church
- ☞ v.12-16 — The Power of the Early Church
- ☞ v.17-32 — The Persecution of the Early Church
- ☞ v.33-42 — The Preaching of the Early Church



### DAY ONE: “*The Purity of the Early Church*”

Read **Acts 5**. Did you notice the first word of this chapter — *But*? It's actually a key word hinting that we should look for a contrast or comparison. A similar example from the final verses of chapter four would be Barnabas' positive generosity contrasted with the negative example of Ananias and Sapphira.

- Read **4:36-37** and **5:1-2**. List any similarities/differences between the two.
  
- From **v.3-4**, the violation on Ananias' part was not found in the fact that he kept back part of the proceeds from a business transaction for himself. What was it?
  
- Luke seems to want to stress that the sin wasn't against Peter. Who did Ananias lie to?

There are two compelling lessons to be gleaned from this account: 1) the seriousness of **hypocrisy**, and 2) the importance of **giving cheerfully**. We can tell that the issue wasn't in the amount they gave, but that they wanted everyone to think they were more committed and generous than they actually were.

In the Sermon on the Mount, we learn that the word *hypocrite* refers to someone who is an actor—someone who plays a part. Does it not seem like Ananias was attempting to *act* like Barnabas?

- Read **Matthew 6:1-18** and share how believers are to give, pray and fast to please God.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Read **2 Corinthians 9:7**. Has your experience of giving always been cheerful?

<p>Q. How much should a Christian give? A. As much as you can do cheerfully and honestly</p>
--

- From **v.5-10** recap what happened to Ananias and later Sapphira.

Does this shock you? A death sentence from God for merely lying?  
Why does God not deal with *us* in the same way today?

- From **v.11** what was the response of the *Church*?

What would have been YOUR response if you had been a part of the young Church?

"Sin has many tools, but a lie is the handle which fits them all."  
— Oliver Wendell Holmes <sup>4</sup>

## **DAY TWO: “The Power of the Early Church”**

Read **Acts 5**, then focus on **v.12-16**. What sorts of things were taking place *at the hands of the Apostles*?

- **v.12**
- **v.15**
- **v.16**

Those must have been exciting times—don’t you think? The Apostles were realizing the fulfillment of what Jesus said would happen when the Holy Spirit came upon them—POWER!

Read **1 Corinthians 12:1-11**.

- In our Acts passage, which gifts of the Spirit from this list do you see being employed?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Would any of this have been possible without the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Jesus said they would receive *Power* to be His witnesses. What indication do you see from **v.14** that their Holy Spirit Power was effective?

There is another indication from **v.12**, of the effectiveness of the lifestyle of the believers: *'they were all together'* (I like the more poetic wording in some translations: *'with one accord'*).

Read **John 17:20-22**.

- How do you see Jesus' prayer from John answered in Acts 5?
  
- Is there an element of this type of unity that you think we could improve on in your Christian experience? What would the Lord have YOU bring to the table to make that happen in your sphere?

### **DAY THREE: "The Persecution of the Early Church"**

Read **Acts 5** (focus on **v.17-32**). Do you remember our comment earlier that, if Satan could not destroy the Church from the inside through compromise and hypocrisy, he would attempt to destroy from the outside through persecution? But God is sovereign and always has the victory. Let's find out how...

- From **v.17-18**, what happened and why?
  
- From **v.19-20**, how did God respond to the threat? What instructions were given for the Apostles' next move?

Unaware of what happened, **v.21** says the Jewish leaders *sent to the prison to have them* (the Apostles) *brought* (to the council).

- What was *reported* to the council? (**v.23**)
  
- What was the response of the captain and chief priests? (**v.24**)

So, the Apostles were brought into the council for a lecture!

- In **v.28**, of what two things had the leaders accused them?
  
- Were these relatively true accusations? (Read **Matthew 27:22-25** before you answer)

Can you imagine how intimidating it must have been for Peter to be standing in front of that council? Just a few months earlier, Jesus was standing before that same group. Peter must have suspected this might not go well, and yet, how did he answer their questions and accusations:

- With regard to his own intentions for the future (**v.29**)?
  
- With regard to the Jewish leader's actions in the past? (**v.30**)?
  
- With regard to God's actions on Jesus' behalf (**v.30-31**)?
  
- With regard to God's actions on behalf of the Jews (**v.31**)?



- What was the name of the Pharisee who spoke his mind? (v.34-39) (Read also **Acts 22:3** for more information about him.)
- How was he viewed among the Jews? (v.34)
- How do you think God used his credentials?
- Recap Gamaliel's logic, argument, and advice:
- What do you think about his statement, *if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them*?
- Describe the council's response to Gamaliel's speech (v.39-40):
- Describe the Apostles' response to the council meeting (v.41-42):

## THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN THE LAST DAYS:

This is where we want to specifically apply things the Holy Spirit may have taught us through **Acts 5**—things we see happening in the *First Days of the Last Days* that we want to apply to our *Last Days*!

- **Hypocrisy:** Peter accused Ananias of lying to the Holy Spirit— basically, thinking God neither sees our actions or knows our thoughts, as we masquerade as a more pious person than we are. Is there any of this hypocrisy in your life that you need to confess? Repentance brings a great sense of peace!
  
- **Cheerfulness in Giving:** Have you even been coerced into giving something or giving more than you wanted? Maybe, like Ananias, people around you were generous and you want to be perceived like them; but you weren't cheerful and lost the reward. What might God be showing you to change in this area of your life?
  
- **Boldness in the Name of Jesus:** As the old Gospel song goes, "*There's just something about that Name*". The religious leaders in **Acts 5** did not want to hear any mention of the Name of Jesus. They had slightly different reasons than our culture — But, we do share this in common with the early Church.



- Go back through chapter 5 in your Bible, and underline or mark those instances regarding *The Name* (v.28, 40-41). Why do you think religious talk is acceptable to some people, but speaking the Name of Jesus is intolerable?
- Since many corners of our culture now consider speaking the Name of Jesus a criminal offense, how can you prepare to share your faith (repentance and forgiveness in the Name of Jesus) and reconcile that with **Romans 13:1-7**?
- How does this impact areas of your regular rhythm of life?

*No doubt the Sanhedrin thought they were the winners that day; but it was clearly the Apostles who won in terms of the building up of both their faith and Christian character.*

—Warren Wiersbe<sup>3</sup>





- Then they proposed what *good* solution to the problem? (v.3-4)
- What do you think may have happened if the Apostles themselves had turned into administrators rather than teachers and prayer warriors?

Let's not use these verses to make *administrators* out to be second-class citizens in the Church. If you study the life of Joseph, you'll realize he was a master administrator as he was put in charge everywhere he went — and he was used mightily by God.

Read **1 Corinthians 12:27-28**. Did you notice the spiritual gift of administration listed with *prophets, teachers, and miracle workers*? Sometimes administration IS miracle working! Serving tables wasn't beneath the Apostles, they simply understood that it wasn't *their* gift to employ — God had given them a special task and they needed to stick with it.

- Serving the needs of the widows was such an important task that seven men were commissioned in what special way in v.6?

This is our first introduction to **Stephen**, around whom the remainder of our week's study will be centered.

- What do you learn about Stephen's character through these verses?

## DAY TWO: “*The Fabricated Accusation*”

Read **Acts 6-7**, then focus on **6:7-15**. We see another reminder that the Church was growing!

- Luke told of what specific group of people who joined the believers? (v.7)
  
- **V.9** told us about specific people, who did not like the teaching of the believers. What was their interaction with Stephen?

Since these troublemakers didn’t seem able to win any arguments, (they were, as we like to say, *on the wrong side of history*), they changed their tactics to lies.

- Whom did they accused Stephen of blaspheming? (v.11)  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
- And what did they incite false witnesses to accuse him of speaking against? (v.13)  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

The reason we wanted to note these four elements of untruth is that it helps us make sense of Stephen’s long speech, as we observe him address and uphold each of these in an impressive way.

But, about those troublemakers...what was up with them? Here was Stephen with the Spirit’s wisdom, grace and power, spending his time serving widows. Why all this trouble? Read these passages and take note of why situations like these happen:

- **Matthew 10:16-20**
- **John 15:18-20**
- **1 Corinthians 2:14**



- The exiled Moses (v.20-29)?
- The deliverer Moses (v.30-37)?
- How did Israel regard Moses during the wilderness years? (v.38-43)
  - What do you think is significant about v.37, “*God will raise for you up a prophet like me from your brothers*”?

After Stephen shared his personal view about Moses (whom he’d been accused of blaspheming), he then turned to *this holy place* (6:13) meaning the temple.

- What history did he present about the tabernacle? (v.44-47)
- Even though the house of God is holy, what conclusion did he give about where God dwells? (v.48-50)

As you read Stephen's summary and conclusion in **v.51-53**...

- Do you think his accusers were actually guilty of the crime for which they accused him?

Israel is often described as *stiff-necked* in the Scriptures. Do you know a *stiff-necked* person? How would you describe someone like that?

We see in these accusations that such an idolatrously high regard for **Moses, The Law** and **God's temple** caused these men to fail to:

- recognize the Christ whom **Moses** prefigured,
- realize **The Law** represented God's character,
- understand God does not dwell in a **temple** made by men, but in the hearts of those who love and obey Him.

#### **DAY FOUR: "The First Martyr"**

Read **Acts 7** then focus on **v.54-60**.

- List the words and actions of the accusers:

- List the words and actions of Stephen:



You probably listed Stephen's final words from **v.60**. Read also **Luke 23:24** and then write down all of the ways that Stephen's and Jesus' experiences were similar:

Put yourself into that context. Stephen's stoning must have had an impact on the believers, and yet we don't hear of people turning aside from their faith. What would you have been thinking if you had been part of the early Church?

**V.55** tells us that Stephen was *full of the Holy Spirit*. We've come across multiple accounts of people being *filled* with either the Holy Spirit, or quite honestly, something else. Review these passages and make notes regarding choices people make for *filling*:

- Acts 2:4
- Acts 4:8
- Acts 4:31
- Acts 5:3
- Acts 5:17
- Acts 6:5
- Acts 6:8

What are your conclusions? Your inspiration? Your plan?

## THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN THE LAST DAYS:

Even though our text this week was centered on distributing daily food to widows and a Church leader cast out of the city and stoned, neither of which we see done regularly, we can still find applicable lessons from the *First Days* to apply to our *Last Days*.

**Calling and Spiritual Gifts**—These are both phrases we use when talking about ministry and Christian service. The Apostles knew their calling. They remembered the words of Jesus, “**You are witnesses of these things**” (Luke 24:48) and they knew that Jesus had given them the task of teaching all that *He* had taught *them*. They knew that engaging in a different ministry (serving the widows) would compromise their calling and mission.

- Do you have a specific sense of *calling* for this season of your life? What is it?
  
- Have you found yourself tempted to engage in another ministry that might be needful or interesting, but that might compromise your current *calling*?
  
- Do you have an idea of one or more Spiritual Gifts that God has given you through the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

- Are you using those gifts for the benefit of the Church Body?

**Forgiveness**—Stephen echoed his Savior’s words of forgiveness as he was leaving this earth, **“Lord, do not hold this sin against them.”** This is evidence of the filling of the Holy Spirit. You’re not likely to face an angry murderous mob this week—yet...

- Is there someone YOU need to forgive?

- What is keeping you from this Christ-like act?

**Boldness**—Stephen’s testimony in word and in deed set a tone for the world-wide missions movement to come.

- Where is your boldness meter right now?

- Are there people who inspire you with their boldness?

- How can Stephen be an inspiration to you?

Notes for Teaching  
on Chapter 6-7



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## Acts Chapter 8-9

One way in which the death of Stephen actually resembled the death of Jesus is that, it may have seemed like a victory for Satan in that moment.

But we know that Jesus' death provided a gateway to eternal life for millions; and Stephen's martyrdom opened the door for a great persecution, which spread the believing Christians throughout the region and the Gospel along with them. These two chapters will give us an *overview* perspective of the advance of the Gospel along with *specific* individual stories.

Here's how we will divide up chapters 8-9:

- ☞ **8:1-13** — The Gospel goes to Samaria
- ☞ **8:14:40** — The Holy Spirit falls in Samaria
- ☞ **9:1-31** — The Gospel reaches Saul
- ☞ **9:32-43** — The Gospel reaches Lydda/Joppa

### DAY ONE: "*The Gospel Goes to Samaria*"

Read **Acts 8-9**. From **v.1-5**, note what the following people (or groups) were doing or where they were going:

- Saul:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Devout men:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Apostles:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Believers in the Church in general:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Philip:

Review **Acts 1:8** and, with that in mind, summarize the significance of the events we've just read:

The hostility between Jews and Samaritans began with the monarchy in the tenth century B.C. when ten tribes defected, making Samaria their capital. Only two tribes remained loyal to Jerusalem. It grew worse as Samaria was captured by Assyria in 722 B.C. Thousands of its inhabitants were deported, and the country repopulated by foreigners. When the Jews returned in Ezra's day, they refused the help offered by the Samaritans in the rebuilding of the temple. Not till the fourth century B.C., did the Samaritan schism harden, with the building of their rival temple on Mount Gerizim and their rejection of all Old Testament Scripture except the Pentateuch. The Samaritans were despised by the Jews. —John R. W. Stott<sup>1</sup>

- How is it significant, and what do you think was the motivation for Philip, a Jew, to go to Samaria?
- From v.6-8, describe the overall response to the Gospel in Samaria:
- Now, describe how Simon the Sorcerer's life was affected by the Gospel that Philip brought:

## **DAY TWO: "The Holy Spirit Falls in Samaria"**

Read **Acts 8-9**, then focus on **8:14-17**. Word got back to Jerusalem that Samaritans were accepting the Gospel of Jesus!

- Who traveled to Samaria to check it out?
- What was their purpose in going?

- Before Peter and John arrived in Samaria, what was the spiritual condition of the believers? What had and hadn't happened to them?

*For more reading on the Holy Spirit falling **on** the believers—  
refer to the supplement in the back of this Study Guide:  
“The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Life of a Believer”*

One of the compelling insights in God's choice for His unfolding story of redemption is that He seemed to prepare Peter years earlier for the part he would play in the expansion of His church. Read **Matthew 16:13-19** which provides a hint that Peter himself would be actively present as the Spirit of God would expand across the world. Peter *was* present as the Spirit of God fell on the believers in Jerusalem at Pentecost. Here in this passage, we see he was present in the laying on of hands, as the believers in Samaria received the Holy Spirit.

Read **Acts 8:18-25**:

- When Simon saw the work of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands, what was his idea?
- What were Peter's observations about Simon? (**v.20-23**)
- What was Peter's solution to Simon's business opportunity?
- Peter made some pretty bold observations about Simon. Can you identify a Spiritual Gift that was employed?

Read **Acts 8:26-40**. After faithfully spreading the seed of the Gospel to many people in Samaria, God called Philip to leave *the action* and go to a remote place to share the Gospel with *one person*.

- How did Philip receive his instructions? **(v.26)**
  
- Describe the man whom Philip ran into on the desert road:
  
- What did the Spirit prompt Philip to do? **(v.29)**
  
- What was Philip's opening line to see if he could witness to this man? **(v.30)**

It *just so happened* that the Eunuch was reading a prophetic passage about Jesus, which offered a great segue for Philip to explain the Gospel. I admire people who can take just about any passage of Scripture, and use it to launch into a Gospel talk (Billy and Franklin Graham for example). Although it's probably a specific spiritual gift to be able to do that effectively, I think we could ALL benefit from looking for the Gospel of Jesus on every page of Scripture and practice communicating that to others.

- What was Philip's approach in evangelizing? **(v.35)**
  
- Write the events that followed their conversation: **(v.36-40)**



### DAY THREE: “*The Gospel Reaches Saul*”

Read **Acts 9**. We now reach a familiar passage detailing the dramatic conversion of Saul. These verses could provide material for several pages of study. However, the focus of this Bible Study is the ministry through Peter and the other Apostles in the very *First Days* of the *Last Days*, and the establishment of the Church from *Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth* — from the Jews to the Gentiles.

The Apostle Paul’s presence is an important piece of that picture, but we are going to move swiftly through this section. Perhaps, in a different study, we can linger through these verses.

- We know Saul approved of the persecution in *Jerusalem* when Stephen was killed. Where was the persecution headed now? (v.1-2)
- Describe Saul’s state for three days in the city of Damascus: (v.9)

Verses **10-19**, in my opinion, are really more about Ananias than Saul. I can’t even imagine the personal fear this man had to overcome to be obedient to the direction of the Holy Spirit.

- Describe what God told Ananias to do: (v.11-12)
- God wasn’t obligated to share *inside* information with Ananias, but how did He describe Saul’s ministry in the Kingdom? (v.15)
- When Ananias laid hands on Saul, beside regaining his sight, what spiritual event happened?

Read **Acts 9:20-25**. Do you blame the Damascus Christians for being skeptical about Saul's purposes?

- Describe how Saul *confounded* the Jews in Damascus: (v.22)
  
- Describe the ironic turn of events in v.23. Who now wants to kill whom?

Read **Acts 9:26-30**.

- Back in Jerusalem, the Christians were afraid of Saul. What brave soul befriended Saul and brought him to the Apostles?
  
- Do you think maybe this was his own idea, or perhaps, like Ananias, the Holy Spirit had prompted him?

In this chapter, we read a foreshadowing of the Apostle Paul's ministry to the Gentiles. But the door to the Gentiles had not yet been opened.

#### **DAY FOUR: "The Gospel Reaches Lydda/Joppa"**

Read **Acts 9**, then focus on v.31-35.

- As you read v.31, what connection do you see between Saul's conversion and the peace that the Church was experiencing?
  
- Since the Church experienced peace, the opportunity opened and "*Peter went here and there among them all*". Describe the ministry of the Holy Spirit in Lydda: (v.33-35)

- What Spiritual Gift do you see employed?

Read **Acts 9:36-43**. Now, the Gospel moved further west to the coastal city of Joppa (which you may remember from Jonah's fame).

- Summarize the account of Tabitha:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Comment on the result of the work of the Holy Spirit through miracles among the people of Joppa:

## THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN THE LAST DAYS:

**Jesus Changes People**—Those three simple words were printed on a handmade sign that hung in our Seattle apartment in the early days. No change has ever been as famous, flamboyant, or functional as Saul of Tarsus. He was a changed man in those *First Days* and Jesus still changes people in these *Last Days*.

- Do you have an expectation that people around you can change? Become born again?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What about someone who is an enemy of Christians?

- Do you actively pray for the Gospel message to reach those who are enemies of the Church?

**Jesus Changes Circumstances**—Look how quickly we went from *great persecution broke out against the church* in **8:1** to *the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace* in **9:31**.

- What elements of our society do you fear are spinning out of control?
  
- Do you believe God can use even those situations for His own purpose?
  
- How do you think God would have you pray for cultural issues happening around you right now?

**Breaking the Grip of Fear**—Ananias should be our hero!

- Has/is God directing you to do something you fear?
  
- How can Ananias and Barnabas encourage you for your task?



## Acts Chapter 10



Our Bible Study has been building toward this grand finale, as the Gentiles enter the Kingdom of God. It's taken about 8-10 years since the Holy Spirit first fell on the disciples at Pentecost. What we read in this chapter is probably the biggest water-shed event of that decade, since the Resurrection Itself.

Luke wrote a fabulous screenplay alternating between a vision given to the seeker in Caesarea and a complimentary vision given to the preacher in Joppa. The two messages were intended to break down barriers and pave the way for Peter to use that third key of the Kingdom in the Gentile lock.

Here is our outline of chapter 10:

- ☞ v.1-8 — The Vision given to Cornelius
- ☞ v.9-33 — The Vision given to Peter
- ☞ v.34-43 — The Final Sermon of Peter
- ☞ v.44-48 — The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles

### DAY ONE: “*The Vision Given to Cornelius*”

Read **Acts 10**, then focus on **v.1-8**, which introduce us to Cornelius.

- What evidence do you see in Cornelius' life that the Holy Spirit had already been *with* him? (You might want to review **John 4:23**, **John 6:44** and **John 14:17**.)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Describe the vision that Cornelius saw and heard (**v.3-6**).

Does it surprise you that someone, who was not already a Christian, would be the recipient of an angelic visit? One interesting similarity between the *First Days* and the *Last Days* is that we now hear about this happening in abundance in Muslim countries. It's actually quite common for people, who are seeking God, to have a vision which points them in some way to Jesus Christ.

- What actions did Cornelius take? (v.7-8)

Read **Hebrews 6:10**.

- How does it relate to Cornelius?
- How might it apply to your life?

### **DAY TWO: “The Vision Given to Peter”**

Read **Acts 10**, then focus on **v.9-33**. Like Cornelius, Peter was pausing at the time of prayer to seek God, but something was stirring inside him — a hunger for food! Our natural appetite is a God-given mechanism for our physical bodies to flourish. Our spiritual appetite is a Holy Spirit-inspired mechanism for God’s Kingdom to flourish.

- Describe the vision given to Peter (v.11-13).
- What did Peter find troubling about the instructions given? (v.14)  
Read **Leviticus 11** for more insights.

- How many times was the vision of the clean and unclean animals on the sheet repeated? (v.16)
- Why do you think this was significant?

While Peter pondered the vision, God brought Cornelius' servants right to his door—what amazing and perfect timing!

- What was the Holy Spirit's instruction to Peter? (v. 19-20)
  
- God prepares His servants when He has a special task for them. How did God weave together Peter's physical appetite for food with his spiritual appetite to see people repent and believe?

This had to be both exciting and perplexing for everyone. Chapter 11 told us that six brothers accompanied Peter to Cornelius' home, where a group of relatives and friends were waiting for them. It was probably wise of Peter to take additional witnesses, since he must have sensed something unusual was about to happen.

Read **Acts 10:24-33**.

- Describe the awkward greeting Peter was given.
  
- How did Peter wisely deal with this?



- From **v.28**, explain how Peter applied his vision from the natural to the spiritual.

Can you even imagine the excitement in the whole room when, not only Peter, but his men, Cornelius' family and guests — everyone — realized that God had given the two men complimentary visions, which were culminating in this moment in time. Don't you love it?

### **DAY THREE: “The Final Sermon of Peter”**

Read **Acts 10**, then focus on **v.34-43**. Here was Peter's last full-length message to people, whom God was reaching for His Kingdom.

- What was the main point of **v.34-35**? Read also **Colossians 3:11**.
  
- After Peter declared that the Gospel of Jesus is available for ALL mankind, he reaffirmed its source in **v.36**. Read also **John 4:22**. What is that source?
  
- Make a list of Peter's key points from **v.37-42** that express God's heart toward mankind:
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- Go back and mark/underline the words, *witness* or *witnesses*. Of what were the disciples *witnesses*? (**v.39-41**)

Read **2 Peter 1:16**. How do you think those years with Jesus prepared the Apostles as the Holy Spirit moved them to write their accounts?

Everyone loves to solve a mystery or finish a puzzle. It's very satisfying to see the completion of what previously were only clues. In a way, the Old Testament prophets held tightly to those clues and continued to search, but it was not gifted them to see the conclusion.

- After reviewing **v.43**, read **Ephesians 3:4-7** and **1 Peter 1:10-12**. Comment on the various epic implications of this day:

Write out the last 12 words in **v.43**:

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#### **DAY FOUR: “The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles”**

Read **Acts 10**, then focus on **v.44-48**. You know those twelve words that you wrote out above? In the King James translation, that phrase begins with ‘*whosoever believeth*’. We get the sense that the entire household of people listening to Peter were holding their breath to hear those words: *whoever, anyone, Gentiles included, even us!*

They were so ready to step into the Kingdom, since the Spirit of God was with them.

- What happened to them as Peter was still talking? (**v.44**)
  
- What was the reaction of the Jews who came with Peter? (**v.45**)

- Why do you think the Holy Spirit's work *amazed* them?
- What was the evidence that the Holy Spirit had come upon them?
- Go back and read **Acts 2:4** (the occasion of the Holy Spirit coming upon the Jews). Why do you think this particular evidence that the Holy Spirit had come upon them was important for both Jew and Gentile occasions?
- Do you think this passage proves that speaking in tongues will be the evidence for every person when they are baptized with the Spirit?
- What did Peter suggest the new believers do in Cornelius' house (since they had already been baptized with the Holy Spirit)?
- What problems does this passage create for someone who thinks you must be baptized to be saved, or to have the Holy Spirit?

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel,  
for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes,  
to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

Romans 1:16 (ESV)

## THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN THE LAST DAYS:

It's probable that almost everyone reading this Study Guide is a Gentile, and likely an American. As American Christians, we've become so accustomed to the *whosoever will* aspect of the Gospel that we almost need to stop and purposefully remember that in the first decade of the *Last Days*, it was only Jews being drawn into the Kingdom and it was a pretty big deal for the first group of Gentiles to find faith in Jesus Christ.

- In *those days*, the first Gentiles dared to believe that somehow God had made a way for peace with Him. And, they found out that He had!
- In *our days*, there are many people who are holding on to a thread of hope that somehow God has made a way for peace with Him, but for different reasons. They don't perceive being Gentile as the barrier. But perhaps it's a past mountain of sin—maybe sins they feel are unforgiveable, or a current lifestyle of sin, etc.

*You* are not like the Apostle Peter, but perhaps, God will prepare and use *you* to reach someone who needs to understand God's mercy and love for them and what it takes to make peace with God. Peter served his purpose in the day God placed him; and we are each serving our purpose in the day that God placed us.

I hope this Bible Study about the *First Days of the Last Days* has inspired you to soberly consider how God wants to use your life and your circumstances to glorify Him in the *Last Days of the Last Days!*  
—*Be Blessed!*

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise  
as some count slowness,  
but is patient toward you,  
not wishing that any should perish,  
but that all should reach repentance.

— 2 Peter 3:9





## *☞ The Work of the Holy Spirit ☞ In the Life of a Believer*

Since our study through Acts has a fairly quick pace and a chapter-per-week rhythm, there isn't much wiggle room for pausing on subjects that might raise further questions. So, it seemed beneficial to provide this additional section on the ***Work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Believer***.

This section is obviously NOT an exhaustive study on the subject. If you are interested in listening to an entire series on the Holy Spirit, you can use this link for a seven-part series that Pastor Paul taught on the Holy Spirit: [ccontario.com/teaching-series](http://ccontario.com/teaching-series).

What we hope to accomplish with this short section is to organize our thoughts, present a fundamental understanding from the Bible, and get our terminology ordered to help demystify the work of the Holy Spirit—and maybe even correct some misunderstandings.

One way to understand the work of the Holy Spirit is to simply observe the experience of the disciples over that 50+ day time period between the Last Supper and Pentecost. You'll notice three different experiences with the Holy Spirit that are presented in Scripture by three Greek prepositions: *para*, *en*, *epi*. (It may sound complicated, but it's not.)

### ***#1 (para) The Holy Spirit is with us:***

The night Jesus was betrayed, after He shared a meal with His disciples, He explained many things to them including the reality of the coming Holy Spirit.

***John 14:16-17 I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.***

Notice He told them the Holy Spirit was at the moment ***with*** them. ***With*** is the Greek preposition ***para***, which means near or alongside. Jesus explained that the Spirit had already been near to them, alongside of them, with them, drawing them to fellowship with God.

If you're born again, perhaps you recall a time before your salvation when you became interested in spiritual things, maybe you wanted to read a Bible, or felt a need to *get right* with God. This was the Holy Spirit alongside you, *with* you, persuading you. This is what Jesus meant in...

***John 6:44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.***

—but it was going to get better!

***#2 (en) The Holy Spirit is in us:***

In that same statement (John 14), Jesus went on to explain that the Spirit would soon be ***in*** them — *indwelling* them. You may not use the term ***indwelling***, but it's not too mysterious—it simply means *dwelling in*, or *living in*. The Greek preposition ***en***, means, you guessed it, ***in***, ***inside***. A few verses later, Jesus put it this way...

***John 14:20 In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.***

When did that first happen? When did the first person experience the Holy Spirit ***in*** them? Well, the Apostle John recorded it this way...

***John 20:19, 21-22 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week... Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."***

When Jesus breathed on them, they received a new type of life, which we call the **new birth**, or as Jesus said in **John 3:3** to Nicodemus, they were **born again**! This is the beauty for all of us on *this* side of the Cross. Jesus has ascended to Heaven and sent His Spirit to earth to dwell *inside* of those who believe on the Name of Jesus for salvation.



We realize it's God's plan for us to have the Holy Spirit live *in* us and this happens when we believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins. We become part of God's Kingdom, we are born again. Here is a short list of what the Holy Spirit does in our life when He indwells us:

1. Gives us new birth—we are marked.
2. Gives us spiritual insights—we can understand.
3. Enables us to bear spiritual fruit—we have a changed character.

Let's investigate those three elements from Scripture:

***New Birth*** — We get the Holy Spirit tattoo! (I hope that's not irreverent!)

***Ephesians 1:13-14 ...you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance...***

Through the Holy Spirit, we are sealed, or marked, as belonging to God, guaranteeing our place in God's family.

***Spiritual Insights*** — Jesus told His followers that having the Holy Spirit in them would give them understanding...

***John 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.***

***John 16:13-14 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.***

***1 Corinthians 2:14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.*** (Note the natural person does not possess the Spirit of God and therefore lacks understanding in spiritual matters)

**Spiritual Fruit** — Once we possess the Spirit of God (called *justification*), and we yield ourselves to His work in our lives (called *sanctification*), we begin to see the results of changed character. We call these results the *Fruit of the Holy Spirit*.

**Galatians 5:16, 22-23** *Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.*

### **#3 (epi) The Holy Spirit comes upon us:**

We've covered a simple list of the **indwelling work** of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer—those elements that every believer receives as a child of God. But, as we continue our 50+ day observation of the experience of the disciples, we should look carefully at what Jesus told them *after* the Last Super and *after* the Resurrection Day encounter (when He breathed on them and said **receive the Holy Spirit**). In Acts 1:5-8, He said...

*John baptized with water, but  
you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit  
not many days from now...  
You will receive power  
when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and  
you will be my witnesses  
in Jerusalem, in all Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

As we return to our lesson on Greek prepositions, we understand our third relationship with the Holy Spirit — *epi*, which means *on* or *upon*. Jesus said this to men who already received the indwelling Holy Spirit! He had breathed on them and said **receive the Holy Spirit**, so the additional experience they were to *wait* for was the Holy Spirit coming **upon** them for power—which we have learned in our study, happened in a very significant way on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem.

We learn from these events and conversations that Jesus wanted the disciples to experience an additional *work* of the Holy Spirit, not yet experienced. He would provide the **power** they needed to be His

witnesses. Jesus called it the *baptism of the Holy Spirit*, making a comparison and contrast to John's baptism.

It's because of these Scriptures, which show different expressions given of the relationship of the Holy Spirit to a believer (with, in and upon), that we believe in a subsequent work of the Holy Spirit that a believer may wait for, pray for, ask for, seek after, that will provide the *power of the Holy Spirit*, through the *gifts of the Holy Spirit*, to be *witnesses* of God's love and His Kingdom on this earth.

So, our conclusion is that every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit at Salvation and, to every believer, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is available.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit requires no special classes, no secret service, no specific qualifications or preparations, except a heart that desires to be *filled* with the Spirit of God, as we see in the early disciples .

If you see in your life a need for the power of God, the operation of the gifts that the Holy Spirit gives for you to be a better witness of His mercy and grace, then simply pray and ask God for the Holy Spirit to come *upon* you. We have been exhorted by the Apostle Paul to...

*Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts.  
1 Corinthians 14:1*

I hope you eagerly desire to be filled with the Spirit of God and spend your life, using whatever gifts He chooses to give you, for the sake of His body which He loves.

—Sue LeBoutillier



## REFERENCES

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## Women of the Word Bible Studies

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The following WOW Bible Studies written by Sue LeBoutillier are available through the **Calvary Chapel Ontario bookstore**, and through our online store at **[www.ccontario.com](http://www.ccontario.com)**.

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